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Statement concerning events on 12 Oct 00 onboard USS COLE (DDG 67)
NAVIGATOR: LT [REDACTED]

The day started around 0500 with reveille, we were expecting to station the Sea and Anchor detail around 0530, start heading into Aden Harbor and pick up the pilot at the pilot pickup point around 0630, pierside around 0730 or 0800. Around 0530, I called up to the bridge because we had not stationed the detail as planned. The CO answered and informed me that we had not heard from Aden port and been able to confirm our pilot pickup time, he wanted to wait until we had confirmation of our pilot pick up time. Around 0545 I heard the detail being stationed and went up to the bridge. Ens [REDACTED] was stationed as TACCOM (Bridge to Bridge) talker and was still trying to raise Aden port control on channel 16. Around 0615 Aden was telling us they couldn't hear us very well on bridge to bridge, we were frustrated, and being that we were not that far out of the harbor, I believe all of us had the distinct impression that they simply didn't want to deal with us until they were ready, and that they were telling us that they were receiving us broken and unreadable merely because they weren't going to talk to us until they were ready to. Of note is the fact that they told a merchant also on her way in around this time that she was also broken and unreadable, but I believe it was because they didn't want to deal with her either. Around 0630 we were told by Aden to back and fill; we could expect a pilot around 0730. We did circles at 5 kts waiting for 0730. At 0730 we heard from Aden, they sounded annoyed, believing they had told us to proceed in the harbor at 0730 to receive the pilot, not wait to receive the pilot. The CO rogered out on the Bridge to Bridge and we headed in at 5kts. Shortly after we picked up the pilot. I didn't notice anything unusual at this time. In fact I thought he appeared to be quite professional. I was over by the chart table during the Sea and Anchor; our fix interval is two minutes during Sea and Anchor. We anticipated some resistance to mooring us starboard side to from previous port visit after action reports. I overheard the discussion between the CO and the pilot concerning twisting us so we could moor starboard side to, I wasn't paying too much attention but it seemed that the pilot did not want to twist us but the CO was insistent and once in the harbor we twisted and moored starboard side to. The currents were very light/negligible during the Sea and Anchor. I believe the pilot's name was Ibrahim. Once we were pretty much moored, lines singled and the CO concentrating on the final phase of line handling, the pilot came over and asked me to fill out the pilot receipt. I wrote everything in but was not familiar with our net tonnage of hand. The MPA, Ens [REDACTED] was on the bridge so I asked him to help me find the correct value. He called down to CCS and we got a number, which we gave the pilot. I had the messenger run down to the XO's stateroom to grab the ship's seal stamp. The CO signed the pilot receipt. The pilot around this time was anxious, he couldn't find his hand held bridge to bridge and he wanted to know what was taking our CO so long to tie up. He definitely wanted to get off the ship. I found his hand held, gave it to him, I don't remember seeing him after that and assumed he had made it off. It was around 0940. Shortly thereafter, we secured from Sea and Anchor. I went about doing things to prepare for the Navigation brief for getting underway after taking time out to just sit and talk to some of my fellow officers. I went down to CIC to check on the progress of the charts. It was around 1045 when we heard over the IMC the XO announce that it looked like we would be getting underway sooner than expected, with an expected underway time of 1400, requiring the Sea and Anchor to be stationed at 1300. Thinking I didn't have a lot of time, I head up to my stateroom to work on the power point presentation for the Navigation Brief for getting underway from Aden which is required prior to getting underway. I felt the explosion; it felt more like a collision than an explosion from where I was located.

Very Respectfully,
[REDACTED]

Navigator
USS COLE
DDG-67

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